Mr. George Lardner
Newsroom
Washington Post
1150 15 St., NW
Wash., D.C. 20005

1/25/77

Dear George,

It is a fair story. I hope the Members are led to think about it.

To date neither House has cause for pride in its record on this subject.

I have not courted either House and I will not. Recently I have written O'Neill and Edwards only. I tried to lay the problem out for O'Neill. It was over Andersen's attack on him that I wrote Edwards.

Because I do not think this story will end regardless of what the House now does I would suggest to you that important as the Archives is - and it is quite important - it does not hold all the answers in the JFK case. The right questions were not asked of the right people.

What has come to pass was so easily foreseen I did, as Claiborne may recall, and said it 4/75. Beginning that summer, when I was asked for a position paper, my expression of the approach the Congress should take has not changed. The criticisms you report are, I am pretty certain, in what I twice wrote for Downing once he got to the Rules committee and warned Sprague about in person on 10/20/76. I am not boasting. I am saying it was obvious and should have have required me to articulate it. Most Members are lawyers. I am disturbed that none seems to have behaved as lawyers do.

The manner in which the committee spent its money, without accomplishing anything of real value troubles me in a different way because there had been agreement on a different approach, one that would have met these criticisms, including by Sprague.

In my belief the only real need the committee had for money in the last session was for court reporting services, the absolute minimum in staff, most of that staff being required for assembling the basic available materials and considering future staffing and recruitment, and for those in charge of each part of the investigation to be able to look ahead.

I cannot ignore the fact that those who knew better blew what they had. I cannot say it was deliberate, either. But it did happen, done by sophisticated people who did not require the warning they did have.

If you have time I'd appreciate knowing what you learn and do not print having to do with continuation only so that if I am asked by Members I may be of more use to them. From my point of view whatever happens now is not going to be what I'd have preferred. Truth and public knowledge and understanding are the early casualties. As it has been and need not have been, this committee will be a mark for those agencies concerned over what a real investigation can mean.

Interesting coincidence is the UPI story headed "Suit Against Garrison Survives Court Test." For me it is a reminder of Santayana's wisdom that he who does not learn from the past is doomed to relive it. I tried to keep Garrison's feet on the ground with little success. It would be impossible with the many Garrisons in the House and on the staff and among the hangers-on.

If there is a Rules committee transcript of the sessions on approving the resolution I'd like to study it and to have it for archival purposes. I meant last session's but both would be helpful. I guess they are meeting again today.

Sincerely,